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escorting him to town, guarding him during his stay there and escorting him home again. If they refused without justifiable cause to give him such service, he withdrew his support from them at least for a time.

The bajraktar was also much occupied with local administration. Here he was assisted by one or more headmen, hereditary officials like himself. Independently or together, he and they checked quarrelling, judged and formulated new laws. He was admittedly their superior, and when their views diverged his prevailed. If pressure of work made him think an increase in their number desirable, he had power to make extra appointments provided only that he first submitted the names of his nominees to the Turkish government for approval. In short, he was the acknowledged head of the local administration.

As supreme administrative head the bajraktar had power to summon a general meeting for administrative as well as military purposes. If the matter at issue was important and affected the whole tribe, he sent the *kasnec* (tribal messenger) to command the presence of one man per house. If narrower issues were involved he summoned only one or more headmen and the local *gjobtarë* (fine-collectors) or other elders. Plenary meetings dealt with anti-social acts grave enough to involve the death penalty or expulsion, judged cases of sacrilege against the church, tightened up tribal discipline by enacting new or re-enacting old laws, decided whether to revolt or not against the Turkish government, and heard important messages from the government. In 1908 a plenary meeting[1] was held by each tribe to decide whether or not it should accept the Young Turk Constitution. Smaller meetings handled business where fines were sufficient punishment for transgression. Notably they regulated grazing rights, fixing the day for a general move to summer pastures, stipulating how many animals each family might feed on a common. They also regulated wood-cutting rights and controlled the supply of water for irrigation. The bajraktar presided at all such meetings, took an active part in the deliberations, and signed or set his seal on any minutes that were kept. He and the elders, as being socially superior, sat apart from the commoners. In the Malësi e Madhe he sat on the ground while the tribesmen stood respectfully on their feet.

[1] See M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 74.

[the local military leader--Analyst]

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000 as King Zog's man and therefore anathema to the Italians, must have lost much ground. Zef Doçi as his enemy and as a good Catholic may have regained some.

622 According to Albanian tradition there were no bajraktars before
634 the Turks came, and headmen were literally the head men of their tribe. This would seem to be confirmed by a document dated 1403 which cited Alexius Kastrati, as headman of the tribe of that name, in a list of Albanian chiefs who were rewarded by the Venetians with gifts of cloth. Albanian tradition further alleges that the Turks aimed deliberately at weakening Albanian chieftains. So, on the one hand, Sultan Mahmut destroyed thirty-six kins, root and branch, and his son Mexhi a further number. On the other hand, Sultan after Sultan appointed bajraktars, ostensibly as military leaders but really as pillars of Turkish rule. By recognizing their nominees as administrative heads as well as military leaders they reduced the old headmen to a subordinate position, and thereby lessened their chances of engineering a successful revolt. This policy would explain why some bajraktars were social as well as administrative and military leaders, and others were not. The former presumably descended from headmen who were complaisant enough to accept Turkish rule, and the latter from strong men of lower position in tribes where the headmen were recalcitrant. The Turks must have trusted that pleasure in their official rank, and the increased possibilities of money-making would keep the bajraktars quiet in their turn. Recognizing the hereditary character of the bajraktar was another shrewd step on their part. As the non-hereditary delis and spahis aged or died, a hiatus unfavourable to their rule might arise. When it was a case of 'the bajraktar is old or dead, long live the bajraktar', they never lacked an agent. When
662 King Zog, as Minister Ahmed Zogu, began to unify Albania he
701 saw the danger from the numerous bajraktars. Accustomed to lead
634 their tribes to war, unaccustomed to any restraint by a central authority, ignorant and untravelled for the most part and generally of autocratic temper, all of them might not have been willing to submit to the new government in Tirana. Methods of bringing them into line with or without their own wish had, therefore, to be devised. If one was willing to serve loyally, the government treated him as the Turks had long before treated a pliant headman. It made him an officer in the reserve, the modern equivalent of the ancient bajraktar, gave him the half-pay of his rank, and provided

1/n local military and administrative leaders--Analyst

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for his sons and nephews, granting them state scholarships on which to complete their education or military training abroad, and finding them employment as officials or officers when they came home. The most notable example of this 'pliant headman' type of bajraktar was Hakik Meta of Lurë, who was himself a captain and had several relatives who were officers in the Albanian army. If a bajraktar was likely to be recalcitrant, King Zog's government tried two methods. The first was a duplication of the system applied to the pliant headman type with reserve rank, half-pay and provision for relatives all included. Thus Gjon Markagjoni, the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë, who rebelled openly in 1921 against the central government, was rewarded for his subsequent submission by being made a lieutenant-colonel in the reserve. Cen Elezi of Dibër, whose father was killed in battle against King Zog's men in 1924, was later made a major. But fewer of the relatives of such men were educated at state expense, and the education given to those few was not so advanced—it seems to have been dangerous to put too much knowledge into their heads. And when they were ready for office they were kept in outlying unimportant districts, 'safe' areas.

The second and far more important method employed by King Zog with possible recalcitrants was the Turks' very own. The usual favours of rank in the reserve, half-pay and the provision for dependants were bestowed on a number of tribesmen who had given proof in the past of their loyalty to the régime and were 'strong' enough in the military sense to combat the influence of the obstinate bajraktars. Captain Mark Miri of Gurrëzë, who was a counterpoise to the Gjetë Coku family of Breg i Matit as well as to the bajraktar, was one example of this type. So was Major Miftar Selmani of Lumë, who was supposed to balance his fellow-villager, Muharrem Bajraktar. The transfer of the administrative powers of the bajraktars to state officials completed their weakening. The unity and stability which characterized King Zog's Albania to an extent surprising in a Balkan country were the best commentary on the policy.

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of Turkish rule these were the famous law-givers Dedë Lleshi and Likë Gjegjaj. Again, when Per Dedë Ndoj was senior headman of the village of Gojan in Mirditë, he took the lead in publicly executing a man of his own kin, Buçaj, for murdering a guest who belonged to the Martinaj kin in the same village. The story is related by Father Gjeçov.

This fifth type was the recognized superior of the sixth, the body of men who were unitedly called 'village elders'. These consisted of all the brotherhood and kin elders in the village as well as the village elder himself. For instance, in the district of Kurbin there were sixteen villages, each of which had its 'head (or village) elder'. But according to a document published on p. 129 of Father Gjeçov's book, there were altogether forty-five elders in Kurbin. Besides the sixteen 'head elders' there were twenty-nine ordinary 'village elders', some of them kin elders and some brotherhood elders. In Mirditë these village elders were known as 'canon elders', because it was their business to see that the law was respected and applied. To avoid confusion between the single village elder and the body of village elders these will henceforth be alluded to as canon elders.

The document mentioned by Father Gjeçov introduces us to the seventh type, a personage styled 'chief elder'. In the document he was chief of the 'forty-five elders of the region of Krujë' (i.e. Kurbin). There is no explicit information of how his position came to this man or whether it was hereditary in his family. It can only be inferred that as he was a Përvizi of Skuraj, and this family led Kurbin, the position was hereditary and a tribute to the outstanding strength of his family. In so large an area as Kurbin there could not be any question of all the villages being related by blood and owning allegiance to Përvizi as the descendant, master after master, of the master of the ancestral household. In other districts where a chief elder existed, it may be assumed similarly that he owed his position to the personal qualities of his family rather than to its descent.

Some other kinds of elder were found, both among the southern tribes and elsewhere, but it will be easier to understand their position after the characteristics and functions which were common to the elders have been elucidated.

Viewed as a human being, an elder was an ordinary man without privileges other than the corner seat, head of the roasted animal

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compulsory. Any who failed to attend and could not justify their absence were fined. Together with the general public, they had to investigate complaints against a senior elder or a bajraktar, and if they found him guilty, they had to fine or ostracize him. In their attempts to prevent breaches of the peace they were entitled to try any method from peaceful persuasion to forcible restraint by the whole village. When, for instance, a tribesman refused to accept a judgement that was demonstrably lawful and unbiased, they could call a General Assembly to discuss the case. A public fine generally ended the man's obduracy. If not, the village elders could ask all the headmen and 'soldiers' of the tribe to come and bring him to his senses by threatening to destroy his house and property. They continued to apply the old law, the public preferring these methods to those of modern officials.

Canon elders were subordinate to the bajraktar and the voivodes of their tribe, acting as their assistants at General Assemblies.

In non-tribal districts like Shpat and Martanesh the canon elders of Mirditë were represented by a body of men called 'local elders'. These were hereditary, found in every village and restricted in their law-giving to their own village.

Another type were called 'specialist elders' in the southern tribal areas, 'regional elders' or 'mountain elders' in Martanesh, and plain 'elders' in Theth. The great majority owed nothing to heredity and everything to themselves, being ordinary men who had gradually built up a reputation for good sense, conciliatory temper and especially knowledge of the mountain law. A few were hereditary elders who had displayed the same qualities. Except in a few unusual cases they did not hand on their gifts or their position. As it required time to build up their reputation, the generality were older than herditary elders when they attained this position. They began by settling petty troubles within their brotherhood and gradually as their reputation grew, they extended their sphere of action to their kin, village and district in succession. A brotherhood elder must not interfere in another brotherhood, a kin elder in another kin or a 'local elder' of Martanesh in another village. But the specialists might travel far and wide outside their own social unit judging and arbitrating wherever required. Provided that they judged according to the law, their judgements were binding and overrode any delivered previously by a local man. As gifted men do not arise at will, they were never common but were found only

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here and there. After the introduction of modern codes of justice they had little chance to emerge.

Above all elders, in both Mirditë and the adjacent tribes, came the Gjomarkaj family. This family was regarded as the source of all knowledge of the mountain law and represented the final court of appeal. The villagers of Martanesh carried many of their graver troubles to its head, but at the same time had often a 'special elder' whom they consulted in such cases. Selim Peshku, who died about 1910, was the latest example. The tree under which he sat dispensing justice in Martanesh is still shown. In the north the bishop or a specially gifted priest was the ultimate referee. They were consulted not so much for their knowledge of the law but because of their reputation for probity.

Functionally the brotherhood elders of Mirditë were represented in the Malësi e Madhe by the 'ward elders', who ruled and judged in their own small community, the village ward in which they lived. They were more commonly called *gjobtarë* ('fine-collectors') from their primary function of collecting fines. As legal functionaries they resembled specialist elders rather than brotherhood elders because they were ordinary tribesmen and owed their position as elders, not to hereditary right, but to special appointment. They were selected, however, not by the public like the specialists, but by the local bajraktar or voivode. On taking up an appointment to judge or arbitrate they were known as 'soul elders', on account of the solemn phrases with which they were commissioned. The commissioning bajraktar or voivode first asked, 'Do you pledge your souls, elders, that it was so?' On receiving their assent he laid a stone on the ground before them, saying, 'With body and soul, with a stone in front of you and with God's justice set these two people straight in any way that you can see'. It goes without saying that only upright men were willing or were asked to accept a charge laden with such danger to their soul after death. These northern ward elders had no connexion with the ward elders of Godolesh near Elbasan, who were seven in number for the six wards (mëhallë), all subordinate to the paid non-hereditary headman and his two assistants.

Another functional type, which was most important for the repression of crime and was found everywhere, was constituted by 'juror elders'. When trying a case, the judging elders might decide to make one of the disputants take an oath that he was not guilty.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

It was the law that every injustice done by Albanian to Albanian must be righted by means of elders and pledges, not by killing. This was crystallized in the adage, 'Killing for a fault is not permissible'. If, for instance, a man caught his neighbour stealing his sheep he had no right to kill him. He should bring him before an elder who would set the proper legal machinery in motion against him, even sending him if necessary before a General Assembly.

Associated with the elders in the administration of justice were the bajraktar and voivodes with, in Mirditë, the Gjomarkaj family. They were not judges in the Western European sense of public officers appointed to administer the law. They were men who judged by right of birth or weighty personality within their native area and they were permanent officers, irremovable so long as their physical powers lasted. They were always illiterate, trained only in the school of experience; practical men and not theorists. It was their special function to preserve the peace in their area by wise and just judging. They were in the literal sense of the words Justices of the Peace. But they could only interpret and apply the law. To make it was the prerogative of a General Assembly of the tribe.

As administrators elders received no fees, nor did they receive any when serving as juror or murder elders. But they were almost invariably paid for judging or arbitrating. In the Dibër area their fee was simply called 'pay', but it was camouflaged as 'sandals' in the north and Mirditë, and as 'coffee' in the south. In north Albania, where the formula was 'fee by the jobs', the fee was fixed and varied with the case. In Lumë, for instance, it was six Turkish pounds in a murder case and a watch worth one napoleon in a water dispute. In Mirditë it was five grosh for a case slight enough to finish in one morning and ten grosh for more serious cases in which the elder, stone on shoulder, had to give his oath. Ten grosh was the canonical fee in Kastrat after the Convention of 1892.[1] In Perlat the fee was adjusted to the client's means, an oke

[1] See Appendix, Document V, § 17, p. 264.

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CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

619 Turkish suzerainty affected the life of the remoter areas so little that each tribe, and in non-tribal areas each region, was virtually a self-governing unit. The governing bodies in tribal areas were the General Assemblies and the Partial Assemblies. In Turkish times these meetings were often called *mexhlis* (from Arabic '*majlis*' meaning council, assembly, parliament). *Kuvend* is the Latin '*conventio*' (gathering) in Albanian dress. In non-tribal areas regional or village assemblies corresponded to the general and partial assemblies of the tribes.

The General Assembly was usually a tribal gathering, but the word *Kuvend* was used by the Albanians to indicate the national parliament during the German occupation in 1943–4 when Albanian nationalism expressed itself in rejecting the use of words of foreign origin.

In the fifteenth century there was a *Kuvend* of great historical importance when the men of the region of north Albania met to hear Lek Dukagjini, the lord of the extreme north, debate points of law with Skanderbeg, the lord of north central Albania.

[L34] Tribal assemblies brought together one or more tribes. These were plenary, attended by the whole tribe (or region) on the basis of 'one man from each house'. They were convened and presided over by the highest authority available. This was the bajraktar in most tribes, but one of the Gjomarkaj family or a bajraktar in Mirditë. In Dibër, Mat and Kurbin it was the head of the leading family, and in Çermenikë the regional elder. Miss Durham found the president elected in Theth, and stated that this innovation was spreading. Where a General Assembly of two or more tribes took place the meeting resulted from a conference of the chief men of each tribe, convened by the highest dignitary in each tribe and presided over by the highest of these high dignitaries.

613 623 Partial Assemblies too were plenary and were convened and presided over by the head of the unit concerned. The more important were formed by a village or a kin. In a document preserved for

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us by Father Gjeçov,[1] the last clause announces that though the Pecnikaj kin of Shalë laid down the law enunciated in clause 2, it had the support of the Lotaj, Abati (Abat) and Bobi (Bob) kins in doing so. Its first and its fourth clauses consider the adhesion of the brotherhood of Theth as well. Occasionally there was a partial meeting of a brotherhood, and at the bottom of the scale there were household meetings at which the master set some common problem before all the men in the family.

Generally speaking, assemblies of all types took place at irregular intervals, to meet some special need, though the demand that they should be called regularly once a year was not unknown.[2]

When a kin or smaller meeting was in question, the convener sent anyone he could find to call it. Bigger meetings were summoned by word of mouth by the public messenger. In Mat a gipsy beat out the summons on his drum and in Shpat church bells were rung.

Attendance at a plenary meeting was compulsory, non-attendance punishable by a fine. For instance, an elder of Kurbin who failed to turn up and could not satisfy the other elders that his absence was justified was fined five rams. An ordinary tribesman in the same area was fined one ram and in Kastrat 250 piastres. The strength and solidarity of the tribes were closely connected with the plenary character of their assemblies.

Most public meetings took place in the open air, as church houses were usually too small and schoolrooms and village halls did not exist. Meeting places had to be central and free from cultivation, rock, scrub and forest so as to provide adequate seating space In Catholic areas the yard of the church was commonly used for General Assemblies and in Moslem areas that of the mosque. Assemblies of a village or kin could be held in the most central of the smaller clearings of the area, and a house was big enough for a brotherhood or household assembly.

Some meeting-places were specially famous. At Lesh, a thriving seaport at the mouth of the river Drin, and not the malarial inland townlet into which it has been converted by the advance of the Drin towards Italy, Lek Dukagjini and Skanderbeg met by preference, as it was centrally situated for both their domains. The place of meeting was probably the grassy sward near the ruined church on the right bank of the Drin, opposite the modern town.

[1] See Appendix, Document XII, p. 272

[2] See Appendix, Document V, § 16, p. 264.

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623 In Lower Martanesh Selim Lashku dispensed justice to the village of Martanesh under a branching tree by the *Gur i Kuvendit* (Stone of Assembly). At the spring called Gurrë Gega, which is at the confluence of the Shëmil and Gurakuq torrents in Çermenikë, he used to meet his famous contemporary of Gurakuq village, Mus Ballgjini, at plenary meetings of the twelve villages of Çermenikë. A list of the usual meeting-places of his day is to be found in Father Gjeçov's book.

The convener fixed the time and place of meeting. The favourite time was the early morning, as this left the whole day free for arguing.

634 619 The bajraktar presided over the General Assembly and sat cross-legged on the ground in the most honourable place. Near him sat other dignitaries—voivodes, village elders, clan elders, village ancients and clan ancients in due order of social precedence. Facing them and well apart sat the rest of the tribe, the youth, the commoners, the public messengers and the fine-collectors (*gjobtarë*), in a half-circle in Mirditë, and elsewhere in a roughly shaped rectangle or circle. The essential thing was that each man present should see and be seen by everybody else, and should have room to advance, if required, to the dignitaries. Since neither youth nor voivodes and fine-collectors existed in southerly districts like Martanesh, General Assemblies there consisted only of the bajraktar, elders, commoners, and public messengers.

[695] Every effort was made to keep a meeting orderly. When a presiding dignitary, a judging elder or a witness was speaking no interruption was allowed. Insulting remarks and abuse were prohibited under pain of a fine that might amount to as many as five rams. Calling another a liar meant a fine of 500 piastres. For the better observance of these rules when a case was being tried, the disputants were not allowed to address the court. Each had to go some distance away with his elder in order to tell him his story quietly, and had to return to his place at the meeting to await judgement in silence. The elders drew apart from the meeting after their briefing, argued the case out with each other, and returned to the meeting to announce their decision in the hearing of all present. In this way only two or three men talked, the rest sat quiet and listened. In Mirditë a stranger might not take part in a general meeting, but in Lumë and Çermenikë, in the belief that a stranger could have 'nothing in his bosom or his pocket', that

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is to say, no interested motive for his opinion, he was actually encouraged to express his views. Among the Catholics of the far north the priest was permitted to speak, as though he were one of the tribesmen, but his views did not necessarily prevail.

It was unthinkable, of course, that the tribesmen should come without their arms in view of possible dangers on the way. So the law said explicitly that they might bring them. But as soon as they took their places cross-legged on the ground they had to lay their guns on the grass in front of them or on their laps and had to keep them so until the meeting ended. The Catholics sometimes let the priest coax them into depositing their arms in the church house for the duration of the meeting. If anyone raised his gun in anger, it was promptly taken from him by his neighbours. If anyone fired his gun the rest of the meeting immediately formed itself into a firing squad and killed him, and then went in a body to his house and burned it down. Even at the smallest meeting there were four or five important men present who kept a sharp look-out ready to prevent trouble. The priests too kept good watch, and a Franciscan found in Theth by Miss Durham in 1908 told the following story: 'We nearly had a row at the *mexhlis*[1] a little while ago.... I heard a fearful noise and as I ran out a lot of them got up into a bunch like bees and raised their rifles. They were just going to fire. They would not listen to me. I rushed into the church and rang the bell as hard as I could. It had a splendid effect. As soon as they heard the bell, from habit they all shoved their pistols into their belts and took their guns in their left hands and began to cross themselves. No one knew what had happened. They poured into the church to see. By the time we came out again... they were quieted.'

Proceedings usually began with a statement by the president that the tribe had assembled to consider certain matters in the manner required by God and the canon, that is to say, with justice and without innovations or departures from the established law. Great importance was attached to the latter point. The decisions of specialist elders were accepted only on condition that they conformed to the accepted law and did not constitute innovations. This proviso was thought unnecessary in the case of elders who had been bred to the law as the specialists had not, and were therefore trusted to stick to it. This conservatism maintained the strength of the law, the main factor in keeping the tribe together.

[1] General Assembly.

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who could write. Though strictly speaking a stranger, he was expected by every tribe, Mirditë included, to attend all its meetings and to act as clerk. Sometimes each man present, sometimes only the president, appended his mark, generally a Turkish seal, to the document. The priest signed as witness, added the date and place, and placed it in the church archives for safe keeping and future reference.

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CHAPTER XV

ASSEMBLIES AND THEIR WORK

623 Assemblies sometimes dealt with internal matters such as criminal
634 trials, formulation of laws, local administration, and sometimes
619 with the external relations of the community. Internal affairs were dealt with, according to their gravity, by the tribe, village or kin, but a plenary assembly had to be called to consider foreign affairs.

619 During the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century
669 the northern tribes of Albania were singly or collectively in constant opposition to Turkish sovereignty, and plenary assemblies were summoned by tribes whenever they planned to break out into open revolt. Earlier in 1855 and 1862 there had been attacks on the Montenegrins by the Mirditë, which had followed on plenary assemblies of the Mirditë tribes.

In 1881 the Albanians of Kosovë formed the League of Prizren in order to struggle more effectively for independence of Turkey.
[631] All over Kosovë and what afterwards became the kingdom of Albania plenary meetings were held by tribes, and, where these did not exist as in south Albania, by districts, to decide on whether to join this League or not. Again in 1908, as Miss Durham relates,[1] the northern tribes held plenary meetings about accepting the new
[721] Turkish constitution. The Albanian attack on the Turkish garrisons in Skoplje and adjacent towns, that began the Balkan war of 1912, was prefaced by general assemblies of every tribe in Kosovë and north Albania. In the summer of 1914, when Esad Pashë Toptani revolted against Prince William of Wied, then *Mbret* (king) of Albania, his supporters raised central Albania in his favour by carrying the Koran in one hand and a crucifix in the other to plenary meetings of the villages and bidding the Assembly, generally consisting of Moslems only, choose between the Moslem Esad and the Christian 'Mbret'. In 1942 a plenary meeting of all Mat was convened by the subprefect of Mat in the hope of enforcing obedience to the Italian government of the day. The decisions reached at the meeting were embodied in a document

[1] *Some Tribal Origins* etc., p. 120, n. 1.

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Like tribes, villages sometimes met together to try to agree about matters of common interest. Villages often quarrelled over irrigation water, and a forest or pasture boundary. They quarrelled even oftener perhaps because the tracks of stolen animals led from one to the other; cattle-lifting and sheep-stealing were common. The most satisfactory way of dealing with troubles was for the two villages to meet in full assembly. After thrashing the matter out in public they generally reached a settlement, failing which they could only go to war. In the early years of the twentieth century cattle thieving was listed as one of the thirteen most important matters brought before General Assemblies in Martanesh. In 1942 it was still so active a disturber of the public peace that the pro-Fascist subprefect of Mat legislated for it among the questions which were the real occasion of his calling together the 5000 families of Mat.[1]

Law-giving was also an important function of General Assemblies. This activity came to an end with centralization and western legal codes, and its nature can be studied in the documents quoted by Father Gjeçov and reproduced as an appendix to this book, pp. 261 sqq. These documents show the variety of matters with which the law-giving of the Assembly was concerned. For instance, Document I, coming from Malësi e Madhe and dated 1864, is wholly devoted to such subjects as betrothal, bride-price, divorce and abduction or elopement. Document XI, which comes from Kurbin in 1906, is much occupied with stealing and with tightening up the social fabric by making attendance at General Assemblies imperative and the authority of elders supreme. With the proclamation of Albanian independence of Turkey only six years ahead, it contains an interesting political note; no Kurbin man is to become a gendarme in Turkish service or to give one food and shelter; and no Moslem of Kurbin is to curry favour with the Turkish authorities by denouncing a Christian fellow-tribesman. Document XIII, which comes from Mat in 1942, is also dated by its politics enjoining support of the Italian régime in Albania.

In the midst of the variety of subjects in the documents, crimes against life and property are continually appearing as the fundamental threats to the security of the community. A study of the documents shows them as reaffirming and modifying old and recognized laws, rather than formulating new ones. Assemblies

[1] See Appendix, Document XIII, § 4, p. 273.

623 attention. These include the use of tribal lands, decisions whether or not to burn forest to make pasture, etc., although such matters usually involve several villages. The elders also convene as witnesses in oath-taking.

● 634 Above the village is the *bairak* (Turkish for banner, standard), a geographical area with some kind of natural unity, so that the people living in it habitually see more of each other than of those without. All of the village councils meet together for the *bairak* council, under the *bairaktar* (standard-bearer), or head of the *bairak* (fig. 10, *e*).[1] His office is hereditary in certain families. King Zog's father was *bairaktar* of Mat, the principal *bairak* of Mati; in Dibra Major Çen Eleze, who acted as host to our expedition, was one *bairaktar*, while Murat Kaloshi, his rival, was another. These men were great feudal leaders, maintaining large households of armed men, and dispensing [177] lavish hospitality to all comers. Çen Eleze had sent two of his sons to the American Technical School in Tirana, where they learned modern agricultural methods as well as perfect English. These boys, huge fellows over 6 feet 3, were of great help to us when we visited Slatina.

The *bairaktar* can become an independent sovereign if he has a strong enough personality and if the tribal authority is weak, and that of 619 the central government likewise. At other times he is under the authority of the head of the tribe, an official chosen from a ruling household, and bearing a different title in each tribe. In Mirdita he is called *Kapedan* (Captain); in Puka, *Shpij e Krye Ziut* (Black-Head House); in Malsia e Madhe, *Shpij e Madhe* (Big House), the exact equivalent of the ancient Egyptian *per āa*, or Pharaoh.

124 Fifty men, comprising 5 per cent of our
619 metrical series, were office-holders in the Gheg tribal system. Eleven[8] were elders, 26 chief

[8] Four from Dukagin, 2 Puka, 4 Mirdita, 1 Zadrima.

1 [see cat. 116, p. 110 - Analyst]

619 643 feud; his cousin, Marka Gjoni, a weak character; his son, Jon Markajon, the incumbent in 1929, a man powerful enough to maintain the tribal system in defiance of the central government, to have his men exempted from military service and taxation, and to exact from Ahmed Zog an annual stipend in return for which he would keep his men quiet.

634 619 Each tribe in Ghegnia is an aggregation of *bairaks*. In 1929 we found 13 *bairaks* in Malsia e Madhe, 6 in Dukagin, 7 in Malsia e Jakovës, 2 in Has, 5 in Luma, 7 in Puka, 5 in Mirdita, one in Zadrima, 4 in Mati, 4 in Dibra, making 54 in all. The names of these, as recorded on our measurement blanks, are:

Malsia e Madhe: Klementi, Gruda, Hoti, Kastrati, Koplik, Greisha, Shkrelli, Riola, Reçi, Loya, Postripa, Triepsh, and Kraja.
Dukagin: Shoshi, Shala, Kiri, Dushman, Pulati, Toplana.
Malsia e Jakovës: Krasniqi, Gashi, Bituç, Marina, Vunshaj, Merturi, Nakaj.
Has: Vlana, Ershan.
Luma: Biçani, Kalishi, Ujmisht, Dolovisht, Çaja (Gorë, a Serbian-speaking *bairak*, is sometimes also counted with Luma).
Puka: Kabash, Puka, Çerar, Mal i Zi, Berisha, Buxhon, Iballja.
Mirdita: Dibri, Fan, Orosh, Speç, Kushnen.
Zadrima: Zadrima.
Mati: Mat, Lura, Kthella, Selita.
Dibra: Reçi, Stashani, Sheheri Poshtar, Sheheri Epert.

This list cannot be wrong in the cases of Puka and Mirdita, for the members of these tribes use the names *shtat bairaket* and *pes bairaket*, meaning *seven bairaks* and *five bairaks*, to designate their tribes. In Luma, Malsia e Jakovës, and Malsia e Madhe the picture is complicated by the presence of the Yugoslav-Albanian border, which not only cuts through *bairaks*, but has caused wholesale migrations and flights within the lifetimes of the subjects measured. Dozens of *fis* of a few households each have shifted about, and it is hard to tell to which *bairak* each belonged at the time the series was measured.

619 634 114 Miss Durham, who made her observations between 1908–13, some 20 years ahead of

[a] Three from Malsia e Madhe, 1 Malsia e Jakovës, 1 Puka, 1 Mirdita, 2 Dibra. All of these except the Mirdita man bore reserve titles.

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me, found the tribal rosters different in some areas from those I later encountered. She calls Malsia e Madhe not a tribe at all, but a confederation of tribes. Of these Klementi is given 4 *bairaks*, Seltzi, Vukli, Boga, and Nikshi, while the other 9, Gruda, Hoti, Skreli (Shkrelli), Klementi (Kilmeni), Lohe (Loya), Rechi (Reçi), Rioli (Riola), Kopliku, and Grizha (Greisha), are said to have consisted of a single *bairak* each. Triepsh and Kraja were not listed, doubtless because they lay over the Montenegrin border even before the imposition of the 1913 boundary. She did not include Postripa in the confederacy, but made it a separate group of tribes.

These were Mazreku, Drishti, Shlaku, Dushmani, and Summa. Only one of these, Dushmani, is given 2 *bairaks*, the others having one each. Dushman is the only one of these names which appears on my list, where it is given the status of a *bairak* of Dukagin. I measured in the village of Postripa itself, and am surprised that no subjects from these separate "tribes" appeared. What I was told was called Dukagin, she lists as "the Pulati group," dividing this into Upper and Lower Pulati. She grants Lower Pulati 4 small, one-*bairak* tribes: Plani, Ghoanni, Mgula, and Kiri. Upper Pulati is given Shala, with 4 *bairaks*, Thethi, Petsaj, Lothaj, and Lekaj; Shoshi, number of *bairaks* not stated; Toplana, same; Nikaj, same. Merturi, which intermarried with Nikaj and is now called part of Malsia e Jakovës, she listed with Puka as a part of Berisha. The reason for this was that "Merturi split off from Berisha eleven generations ago."[6]

Mal i Zi, listed in my roster as a *bairak* of Puka, she assigns to Luma. She makes Gashi, a *bairak* of Malsia e Jakovës, a separate tribe. She also grants tribal independence to the *bairak* of Lura, which she places at the head of a confederation including Mati and Dibra, and to Kthella, which she divides into 3 *bairaks*, Kthella, Selita, and Perlati.

1/1 [See Cat. 116, p 31 b Analyst]

It is my impression that some of these differences are due to a confusion on Miss Durham's part between *fis* and *bairak*, *bairak* and tribe. On page 68 she translates *bairaktar* as "head of the tribe." Had she not gone wrong somewhere it would have been remarkable.

[6] Durham, 1928, p. 27.

619 634 114 Travel in Ghegnia in the years 1908–13 would not have been easy, even for an experienced man. For a woman to have made these journeys is something of a miracle. Others may be the result of the process of amalgamation, for many of the "tribes" which she mentions were miserable fragments of former populations decimated by warfare, and massacred, in some cases, by the Serbs. By 1929 a considerable realignment must have taken place in the whole area north of the Drin, and especially in the regions which she designates as Postripa and Pulati. In any case the 10 groups of people whom I have designated as tribes were so considered by the people with whom I worked in 1929, and form more or less self-contained, intermarrying units, sufficient for our present purpose.

619 628 Under the tribal system warfare was almost continuous. The underlying cause was of course population pressure. The overt causes were seduction, theft of women, elopement, cattle-stealing, and general raiding. It did not take much to give offense, particularly in the late winter, when food was scarce. Even a man who had almost enough to eat himself would be under severe tension, because of the general nervous strain of his kinsmen and dependents, and consequent maladjustment within the household.

522 A chance blow, a harsh word, even a play on words which is very easy in Shqip, or above all a cruel joke—these seemingly minor conflicts often led to gunplay and murder, with consequent feuding. I had several occasions to feel their Iron Age wit, so much like that of the Norse sagas. Once my host in Zadrima remarked, in front of many people, that I had the skinniest legs he had ever seen, and wondered how I could walk. The assembled company burst into Homeric roars. On another occasion, in a Puka *han*, I lifted my head suddenly and hit it a sound smack on a protruding nail, partially stunning myself in the process. This was the funniest thing in the world. Once again, when Farnsworth and I crawled into our sleeping bags for the night, the whole household laughed and laughed. When we asked what was the matter, they said, "Just think, if the house should catch on fire! You

124 has to face in the field. Half the Luma sample came from Biçani, which comprises over half the tribe. As one can readily see, these Moslems marry within their own *bairaks* most commonly.

614 634 In Puka it is manifest that Kabash and Çeret form each a single *fis*. Berisha, the oldest known *fis* in Ghegnia, has a companion *fis*, Thach, in its *bairak*, with which it sometimes marries. Buxhon and Iballja each have more than one *fis*, as do Puka and Mal i Zi. On the whole the *bairaks* of Puka, whether single or multiple as regards *fis*, are exogamous. Since marriage across the Drin is frequent, many of the men from Buxhon, Berisha, and Iballja may have had mothers from the Lower Pulati section of Dukagin.

We were able to get a complete list of the *fis* in the tribe of Puka, except for Mal i Zi, as follows:

1. *Kabash*, *bairak* and *fis*. Three hundred houses, located in Kabash, Puka, and Iballja.
2. *Marin*, a *fis* of 30 houses in Puka village of Puka *bairak*.
3. *Guian*, a *fis* of 3 or 4 houses only, in Puka village.
4. *Kashnet*, 20 houses, Puka *bairak* only.
5. *Shkrella*, 20 houses, Puka *bairak*, related to the Shkrelli people in Malsia e Madhe.
6. *Krasniq*, with obvious affiliations, 10 houses, Puka village.
7. *Shala*, with obvious affiliations, 60 houses, Puka *bairak*.
8. *Thach*, this is the only *fis* in Buxhon, and one of two in Kabash, the other being Kabash *fis*.
9. *Berisha*, *bairak* and *fis*, a single unit.
10. *Kcheira*, a *fis* in Çeret.
11. *Shosh*, with obvious affiliations, a *fis* in Çeret.
12. *Çereti*, also a *fis* in Çeret.

614 634 361 In Mal i Zi there are said to be many other *fis* besides these 12. The above list shows 7 different *fis* in the single bairak of Puka, with 3 of them limited to a single village. This situation reflects the location of Puka village

[1] Kashnet and Guian of Puka also appear here. Vik, Mesouli, seem to be others.

614 634 361 at a natural stopping point on the Roman road, where other trails come in. It is also a trading center, and one of administration. Its geographical position has brought in people from many places, and it stands in striking contrast to the more isolated *bairaks* of the same tribe, which in some cases have only one *fis* each. If Mal i Zi has many *fis* as well, that is because it too is conveniently located on the road.

In Mirdita exactly the opposite situation is found; the 3 *bairaks* of Orosh, Spaç, and Kushnen all belong to one *fis*, although one village in Orosh is eligible for marriage with these Dukagini. This village was once part of [124] Kthella. Two of our subjects were the sons of women from this village. Fan and Dibri marry both with Dukagini and within their own *fis*, of which there are several.[1] In our series Kushneni married only Dibri, which was nearest; Fan mostly Orosh, for the same reason. One blank bears the astounding information that its subject was the son of an Orosh father and a Kushnen mother. This is undoubtedly some kind of a mistake, possibly similar to the situation noted above.

614 634 Zadrima is only one *bairak*, all Catholic except a few small villages nearest Scutari. Despite its lowland habitat it retains its tribal organization, as well as its Gheg speech, and hence was included in this series. We did not obtain a record of its *fis*.

All 4 *bairaks* of Mati contain 2 or more *fis* each. The 3-part Catholic *bairaks* in the north form an intermarrying group and married with Mirdita extensively in the old days. In the time of our series, Lura was in blood with the Mirdites and the exchange of wives had been broken off. Very rarely do these northerners intermarry with the men of Mat. If this job were to be done again, the 3 northern *bairaks* should be given separate consideration for they are a genetic unit apart from Mat. The northerners are frequently tall, the Mat men almost uniformly short. In Dibra the 4 *bairaks* were almost wholly endogamous, and again separate treatment would be profitable. If we had measured 600 more men, the series would have been a better one.